

# The Crow's Wings

by Calla Bridgestone

Category: Gundam Wing/AC

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2000-06-08 09:00:00

Updated: 2000-06-08 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:45:39

Rating: T

Chapters: 7

Words: 14,239

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: This is my first fanfic, so don't laugh! It basicly starts out with Heero injured, and the cities are being hologrammed to show nothing unusual, and a new enemy has targeted the Gundam Pilots, and Relena and Heero...well, ya know Relena and Heero.

## 1. Default Chapter Title

><br>

Relena's heart filled with an incomprehendable grief as she stared over at the crushed village. Walls had crumbled into one another, people were on the ground, bleeding or worse...

"No," she whispered faintly. "No, this can't be."

She had seen nothing from her place on the balcony. The city had been perfectly intact, it had even seemed bust and bustling with activity from the palace balcony when she had decided to take a walk.

But her walk had led her to death and destruction.

Her gaze shot to the killing machine. The defeated Gundam lay on its side, it's shut-down eyes staring blankly at her. The giant seemed to wish it were dead.

"Heero!" she cried. she lifted up her skirts and ran frantically to the Gundam's stomach. "Heero, are you alright in there?!"

No reply. Her hand turned into fists and she banged them frantically against the door. It wouldn't open.

The skin on her hands split, and blood trickled down her forearms as she slammed her fists harder and harder into the gundanium alloy.

"Heero, please," Relena sobbed, her voice getting hoarse. "Heero,

please, oh please, God, come out...answer me!"

A noise. A faint, whispered sound came from deep within the metal tomb.

\_Fwoooooosssshhhh.\_

The door opened, and Relena took a step back. Blackness. Darkness was all that could be seen as she peered tentatively inside the Gundam's cockpit.

In the corner of her eye, Relena saw something drip from the corner of the door. Crimson.

"Oh, God," she gasped. The crimson liquid made a lake around her feet, staining her shoes forever in scarlet red blood.

"Re...Rele...na..." came a choked voice from within the blackness.

The figure's head fell back, and it's shoulders started to heave, but no other sound escaped from it.

"Oh, Heero," Relena said softly, her hand flying to her mouth. Was he really hurt that badly? "Heero...tell me what happened."

She took a step closer, looking deep inside the cockpit. Tears suddenly blinded her eyes again, and she turned her head away.

Blood was dripping down his temples, reivers, they seemed. The flowed down his temples, down his neck, soaking his pilot's uniform. No one could be alive with such injuries...no one!

He looked...dead.

That thought struck fear into Relena's heart, spiked her so sharply and vividly that that her world reeled. Not Heero! He couldn't die, Heero Yuy was \_invincible...\_

"I'm going to get an ambulance," she whispered, and then turned to rush off.

"Relena, wait."

A bloodied hand grabbed Relena's wrist. She stared down at it, bile rising in her throat...it was as though a corpse were trying to pull her down into its grave.

"Yes, my Heero?" she asked, feeling ashamed at the thought.

"Tell...tell the others that...it was...Sage," he gasped through his pain. "Sage...attacked."

\_Anything, my love,\_ she thought. \_I'll do anything for you...\_

She took his hand, turned it around and pressed his palm to her lips.

"Try to hold on," she commanded. And she turned on her heel and ran.

"Dammit. Cocky, very cocky," Lieutenant Griffon muttered under his breath. He watched as the child was hooked up to the training device.

"What is it, Griffon?" Colonel Richard Gyres asked. He had obviously heard the off handed remark.

"Hmm? Oh yes. Sir." Griffon turned back to the child as the child was given a taste of the ZERO system. The child fell to one knee, grunted, but placed a hand in front to steady the balance. "I said, sir, that maybe Crow is over doing it with the subordination. Sir."

Gyres smirked, turned to Crow. The child was amazing, Gyres had to admit. Only one year into training, and the child was already far more advanced than any of the other training Sage Soldiers.

"This kid's gonna do wonders for us, Griffon," Gyres hailed. "I don't care if this kid goes up against our ranks, just as long as the enemy is caught off guard."

"Yes sir. But Crow--"

"Crow is our main weapon," Gyres interrupted. He smiled smugly, but his eyes wore a certain stern chill that froze Griffon's blood. "Oh, yes. Sage's pride and joy."

Griffon saluted and clicked his heels together. "Sir, yes sir. Would you like to prepare for the gundanium finish?"

"Hold it off for a little while, Griffon. I want to see how long Crow lasts with the ZERO system before the child steps foot into a Gundam."

Duo Maxwell yawned lazily and stretched back onto his reclining chair.

"Nothing like a relaxing day under the sun," he drawled.

"Unless you get sunburned," a voice behind him rang. "Or get Melanoma or something. Skin cancer can leave you in so much pain that it'll make you want to kill yourself."

Duo turned, rolled his eyes at Trowa. "What are you doing here? I thought you were gonna spend the whole day with that computer of yours."

"I decided against it," Trowa answered, slipping his thumbs through his belt loops. "A day like this makes you want to get out here and risk skin cancer."

Duo smirked, settled back down into his chair. The balcony had no roof over it, and the sun shone freely down on the two boys. The village wasn't far off, and the merchants and sellers were busy doing their work.

"Reminds me of a song," Duo mused.

"Please don't sing, Duo."

"Why not?" Duo asked, a little irritated. "I have a pretty good..."

Duo stopped. Trowa straightened, frowned. They both strained their ears to listen again for the sound.

"Is that Relena?" Duo asked.

"Mr. Maxwell! Mr. Barton! Anyone, please, it's extremely urgent!"

"She sounds panicked," Trowa muttered.

"Other than the fact that she's screaming at the top of her lungs on the west wing of the palace?" Duo asked sarcastically. "Gee, what makes you think that?"

They ran into the bedroom and down the marble hallway, their heels clicking on the freshly polished floor.

"Relena!" Duo called. He stopped, panting, and leaned against a wall. "Geez this place is huge!"

Trowa disappeared around the corner.

"Found her!" he yelled.

Duo turned the corner and found Relena panting, gasping for air.

"What is it?" Trowa asked, grabbing her wrists. "Slow down, take a deep breath."

"Heero," Relena gasped out. She shook her head, seeming ready to cry. "Heero, in his Gundam...down in the village, he was bleeding..."

"What?" Duo asked. "Something about Heero and bleeding?"

"The village was attacked!"

Trowa and Duo stared. Then they rushed to the nearest window and glanced out at the village.

Which was perfectly intact. Children were playing out on the streets far off, and women were buying things at the stands.

Duo raised an eyebrow and his eyes wandered over to Trowa. Trowa shrugged.

"It's a trick," Relena said, slamming in between them to look out of the window. "I was taking a walk. It looked exactly like that before my walk, but when I arrive there, guards were posting up roadblocks. I managed to slip in without notice, and I found it was...destroyed."

"A hologram, then," Trowa concluded. "If what you're saying is true,

then there's a possibility we've got enemies."

"Hey, hey, hold on there, buddy," Duo said. "We're not sure that they're enemies. They might've attacked the village for a totally different reason."

Trowa stared blankly at him. Then, "For what, Duo?"

Duo shrugged. "I dunno, maybe they don't like the clothes the people over there wear?"

"Be serious, Mr. Maxwell," Relena urged. A worried look crossed her face. "Heero is hurt, and I think he's going to need medical assistance."

Trowa shook his head. "This is bad. We have to get in touch with Quatre."

Crow stared up at the ceiling of the craft. It was rather large, and extremely heavy to a pilot Crow's size. A \_Gundam,\_ they had called it.

Gundam Echo. Envisioned and Controlled Holocaust Order.

It was larger than a mobile suit, and much more advanced. Crow was glad that Colonel Gyres had let the ZERO system take affect before stuffing the likes of \_this\_ soldier into a Gundam.

The ZERO system. That horrid, horrible system that had made Crow hallucinate, nearly throwing the child into the brinks of insanity and pain.

But Crow was a soldier. Young, but fully trained.

Crow could handle that dreadful system any day.

And then this \_child,\_ as everybody insisted on calling Crow, was going to have a fresh first impression on the people of the colonies, especially the L4 cluster.

But not exactly a good one.

Heero shook in pain. He leaned forward in his seat, letting the belt straps around his shoulder support him.

Such pain, such horrible \_pain...\_

He gasped as another spasm of it hit his body. A wave of nausea crossed over him, and he swung back to lean against his seat instead of the belts. Sweat and blood started to trickle down into his eyes.

"Start surrounding the Gundam!" a voice shouted. "We're going to close off any means of escape for the pilot."

Heero peered painfully out into the village from within the darkness of his cockpit, and he saw men starting to post themselves around him and the Wing ZERO.

Heero started to pant from the sting that weaved throughout his body.

He glanced to his left. The self-destruct was still optional. He grunted against the anguish and pressed the animate button. Lights suddenly surrounded him, Wing ZERO had activated up.

"The pilot's up to something, sir!" a voice rang out.

"ZERO..." Heero exhaled. "Are you still...optional?"

Heero started to cough, a wet, hacking cough that projected a stream of blood that splattered against his screens.

"He's concious! How can anybody be concious after an attacked like that?"

\_I hope this works,\_ he thought in torment.

"He went against at least sixty to seventy of our cloaked mobile suits!"

\_Cloaked. No wonder I couldn't see them. But the radar on ZERO...\_

Heero rammed his left fist into the wall, slamming into the self-destruct button. It made a few beeps, and Wing ZERO started to light a deadly red.

"Oh no! He's self-destructing! Everybody, \_move out!\_"

"Work," Heero begged, spitting blood out of his mouth. A stream dribbled down his chin, down the front of his shirt, spreading a red blossom against his chest to match with the ones already down his shoulders.

Then ZERO began to shut down. One by one, the lights flickered off, and the hum of the engine died down.

"\_Aarrrrrgggghhhh!\_" Heero cried in frustration. He slapped his hands against the sides of his head. "\_Shit! No!\_"

Tears started to stream down his cheeks, mixing with blood and sweat as he shuddered in pain.

"Damn it, ZERO," he more sobbed than screamed in lost hope.

\_Flash...Terror shone in Relena's eyes, but then it flickered into sorrow. She took his hand, turned it around and pressed his palm to her lips.\_

\_ "Try to hold on," she had said.\_

"Enclose the Pilot within the cockpit!" a voice commanded.

\_ZERO,\_ Heero thought in his mind. He could no longer speak, it was much too painful for him to bear. \_Don't let them take you, because I can no longer do anything about it. It's up to you now. Up to you.\_

And then he slipped into the blackness of oblivion, where the mental and physical pain he'd had to endure was irrelevant.



"He's self-detonating," he whispered harshly to Trowa.

"Heero," Relena said softly, with worry, as she started to walk forward.

"Miss Relena." Trowa grabbed her wrist firmly, and she stared back at him. "I wouldn't advise you to get any closer to the Gundam than you already are."

"Why'd she come, anyway?" Duo asked, putting his fingers in his ears and shaking his head.

\_Heero,\_ Duo warned his friend in his mind. \_Don't be a fool...\_

Suddenly, ZERO started to shut down. The red glow vanished, and ZERO's eyes blinked off and out.

"It didn't work," Trowa perceived.

"Are you sure?" Duo calmly asked, being sarcastic.

"Heero," Relena said, biting her bottom lip and pressing her hand to her chest.

\_Is there anything else she says besides that name?\_ Duo pondered.

"Isn't there any way we can get to him?" Relena asked, her eyes pleading with Trowa.

"No," Trowa answered as he watched soldiers reaching into the cockpit of the Wing ZERO. "It's all up to Heero now."

A crumpled figure fell from the Gundam's doorway, literally soaked, \_bathed\_ in blood. A sickening wet slap hit their ears as the body hit the ground.

The three stared on in horror as they hefted Heero, not too gently, onto the back of a pickup truck.

"My God," said Duo.

Crow sighed, made a fist, and let the crow perch upon it.

"We're going after the enemy," Crow said distractedly. "It shouldn't be so hard...after all, the Gundam they spotted in the mountains doesn't look too tough, except for maybe that dragon arm thing..."

Crow's heart ached. The crow just stared, seeming to know, and yet not seeming to at all.

"What am I doing? I'm talking to a bird."

Crow's head shook in disbelief, and the bird flapped off, headed for the mountains.

"I just wish," Crow whispered, staring after the bird. "Wish that I could make like my name and fly off with you."



"He was massacred!" Duo exploded. He shook his head, gritted his teeth angrily. "I swear...whoever did that to him is gonna pay!"

"We can't afford to get too irrational," Quatre said soothingly.

"You didn't see him!"

"Duo, please calm down," Relena begged. Tears glittered in her eyes, but she held herself straight and poised. Duo couldn't help but admire her for that.

"Please calm down," she repeated. "I'm sure...I'm sure you will be able to get him back safely. You are going to rescue, him, aren't you?"

"I don't think it leaves us with any choice," Trowa said. "The village was cloaked to cover anything violent going on in the inside, and we have to figure out how they keep the noise down and avoid letting others see their attack weapons."

"Only Mobile Suits are capable of that damage," Duo said darkly.

"Then why didn't we see them, or hear them?" Trowa asked.

"Beats me." Duo shrugged, then clenched his fist.

\_Whoever did that to Heero is gonna regret going through his mother's birth canal,\_ Duo thought furiously.

There was silence for a while, then Relena cleared her throat.

"I thank you, Mr. Winner, for coming all the way here to my palace from Arabia to help with the issues," she said meekly.

Quatre glanced at her, nodded. He could see the look in her eyes...a blaze of heat and compassion. Relena Peacecraft was stronger than she let most people see.

"So it was Sage, huh?" Duo asked, referring to what Relena had been talking about before he had gone ballistic. He let out an unidentified noise; a growl, a grunt, a noise that was coated with anger.

Duo nodded, looked at the two other Gundam Pilots and Relena.

"Let's kick some Sage ass."

A lone bird swooped through the skies.

Chang Wufei leaned back against Nataka's ankle and breathed a sigh of wonder.

The crow circled high above him, uttering shrill cries of foreboding. Why weren't there others? Usually the crows would troop around the mountains in groups, scavenging for food here and there. But this bird...this bird was solitary.

Like Wufei.

But the crow wasn't scavenging. It just swooped around in the air, its desolate, forlorn shrieks deafening to Wufeis' ears.

"I understand your cries, young bird," Wufei said to himself. "You want companionship. A lost and torn soul."

Wufei touched Nataku's foot reassuringly as he leaned against it. Something solid, something \_there.\_ He had a companion. But the bird did not.

He pitied it.

A strange, high-pitched whistling noise filled the air. Wufei's eyes narrowed, he straightened his back to listen. It was so high pitched you could only hear a faint trace of it.

"What--"

But Wufei was interrupted.

"Ahhh!" Nataku shook, trembled from an incredible impact, and Wufei was thrown into the air.

\_What?!\_ Wufei was on sudden alert, on his feet, his hands held in combat position, his feet dug firmly to the ground. \_Where is the enemy?!\_

Wufei glanced up at Nataku, and irritation blasted up within himself. The enemy had nearly shredded Nataku's right shoulder.

"Those bastards!" Wufei cried, but then paused. He couldn't hear himself. His voice didn't come through, because the unnoticeable ring, though soft and indistinct, was so high that it drowned his voice out. He hadn't even heard the shot being fired!

He scrambled up Nataku and fell into the cockpit.

"Where's the enemy hiding?!" Wufei said aloud, though he still couldn't hear himself.

Nataku shivered, shook, trembled, quaked once more.

"Arrgghh! Stop firing deafened shots!"

Nothing could be heard through the ringing silence.

\_Where's the enemy hidden?!\_ Wufei thought harshly. \_Where in the hell are they?!\_

Nothing could be seen in front of Nataku but the peaceful mountains that surrounded it. His monitors showed nothing! The radar revealed nothing but calm. Not heat sensory, not a thing!

Then, BLAM! Wufei's head rocked back, nearly whiplashed, and hit dead on into the back of his seat.

\_Who is attacking me?\_ Wufei thought through dazed vision. The enemy could neither be seen nor heard.

Wufei gained controls of Nataka's left hand and lashed it out frantically. His training hadn't prepared him for an invisible enemy!

He lit his light saber and drew it, shielding himself with it, but it was blasted silently out of Nataka's grip.

And then suddenly, something flickered in front of him. Colors seemed to swirl, and a Mobile Suit...no, no, a \_Gundam,\_ black as night, glittered, then solidified before his very eyes. Its mouth was coated with orange.

It threw the beam cannon it held with its right hand aside and withdrew its light saber sword with the left.

\_Now you die,\_ a voice he might have imagined rang inside his head.

\_Now you die.\_

"Sage was a non-profit organization," Trowa read from his notes aloud. He had been at the computer all day, trying to hack into files and old documents. "It was actually a smaller part of the Oz Specials that nobody was supposed to know about, but broke off a few months after Heero Yuy was assassinated."

Relena winced, worry locking with her heart again. She couldn't seem to stop worrying about Heero.

A hand was placed on her shoulder. Quatre seemed to smile with only his eyes, trying to reassure her that Heero would be alright, but Relena turned away.

"Are you sure it's OK for her to be here?" Duo asked, a little amused.

No one said a thing as Trowa read more notes.

"The leader of Sage, General Shriu Anork, wanted to rule alone, and when he heard about Treize Khushrenada's sudden rule, he attacked in secret. But Sage wasn't technologically capable of a battle with Oz, and thus brought about their fall. Throughout the years, they seemed to gain technological assistance from a man named Richard Gyres, who became Colonel. Now with Oz destroyed and Khushrenada dead, I suspect Anork wants to gain rule again."

"A hell of a way to do it," Duo remarked.

"I want to help."

All eyes suddenly turned to focus on Relena as she stood there, her hands tightly clasped, her lips set in a grim line.

"I want to help," she repeated, taking a deep breath. "I know I may just be a bother to you Pilots, but...somehow, I'd like to see for my very own eyes that Heero is safe."

Trowa stole a glance at Quatre; his eyes were glittering. How he admired her for her courage.

"No way!" Duo sparked. Relena's protest was cut off by the shake of his head. "Listen, Relena, you may be former Princess of the Cinque Kingdom and former Queen of the World, but now you're a civilian, and we don't want any civilians gettin' involved in this, right guys?"

He turned to Trowa and Quatre. They looked at Duo and said nothing.

"Trowa. Quatre." Duo held his hands out, palms upward, needing an answer.

Quatre sighed, his gaze shooting over to Relena. "Civilians have already taken part, Duo. The civilians they've killed, the civilians they've captured. I don't think Miss Relena's help will be a bother."

Duo let out an exasperated breath and flopped down into a chair. "Tell me this ain't happenin'. How could she possibly help?"

"I know how," Trowa said suddenly. "It's easy. We need a way to find out what they're plan is. It'll be extremely dangerous, but I think she can handle it."

Relena waited patiently as her fate was being played with.

Trowa crossed his arms, looked at her as though examining her through a microscope.

"She can be our own espionage spy."

\_Flash! A noise. Heero whipped around and saw a flash of pink, hiding behind a bush.\_

\_ "Who's there?" he asked.\_

\_ The figure bent over, and seemed to...giggle? It rustled through the bushes and was heading right for him. Heero reflexed, grabbed at his gun and thrust it forward, towards the approacher. His approacher...whimpered?\_

\_ "Hey, relax, its I'm just a little girl," the pink figure, which turned out to be just that, about eight or nine years old, said nervously.\_

\_ "What's your name?" the girl asked as she sat down beside him.\_

\_ "Uh..." Heero looked at her, unable to think of a reason why she would be talking to him. "My name's...my name's Heero."\_

\_ "My name's Lindy," she told him\_

\_ "Why are you here?" Heero asked her.\_

\_ "I saw you from up the hill and thought you looked sad." Did this girl even know what could possibly be happening to Heero right now? "Why are you here?"\_

\_ "I'm thinking about how my life is a living hell," Heero answered,

not a bit hesitant to say the word.\_

\_ "Oh. Doesn't anybody like you?"\_

\_ "No."\_

\_ Lindy giggled, covered her mouth with her hand. "You sure are blunt." She grabbed for his hand, and Heero stiffened.\_

\_ "Well I like you," she said softly, smiling. "I think you're nice."\_

\_ Heero swallowed, felt uncomfortable all of a sudden.\_

\_ "I have to leave," he said, getting up. He walked away.\_

"He's still unconscious, sir," Griffon informed Colonel Gyres.

"Good," Gyres answered. "That'll give me more time to think of what I'll do to them all when I capture the damned Gundam Pilots."

Griffon remained quiet, but when the quiet seemed to deafen, he cleared his throat. "Don't you think, uh...sir, that Crow's damages to Gundam Zero-Five were a little...brutal, sir?"

"It's just as bad as what the sixty mobile suits can do when cloaked," Gyres laughed an insanely joyful laugh. His Crow would slaughter those Gundams and their Pilots effortlessly...

"Sir, his blood pressure has risen," Griffon said. "There is a great amount of brain activity."

"Could he be waking at such an early stage?"

"I'm not sure, sir."

\_Flash! Heero swung around in Wing, fired precise shots at the attacking Mobile Doll. It teetered in the air, slowed down, and Heero brought Wing's beam cannon up.\_

\_ "Time to kill." Heero smiled faintly and pulled the trigger. The blast pushed him back, but he held his composure and watched the beam rip through the enemy's stomach, tearing it into two.\_

\_ The beam kept going and slammed into the opposite water tower.\_

\_ A figure. Down below. Heero's battle-fogged mind made his eyes fixate on a pink dot on the ground.\_

\_ "Lin...dy," Heero whispered vaguely.\_

\_ She stared up at him with imploring eyes. Please don't kill, her eyes seemed to beg. Please stop.\_

\_ In slow motion, Heero's head looked up at the Mobile Doll. It fell to the ground on his left. But the water tower...\_

\_ "Lindy, no!" Heero cried out, lunging to prevent the tower from

crashing down onto her.\_

\_ Focus on the battle, his warrior's mind urged.\_

\_ Heero hesitated for a split second, but a split second too late. The water tower creaked, broke off, fell! Tons of water cascaded to the ground, destroying all in its path.\_

\_ "LINDY!"\_

Heero gasped awake, but the pain stabbed him through the temples, and he nearly screamed.

"Lindy, Lindy," he sobbed, starting to thrash around. But there were restraints on his wrists and ankles. "Lindy...Lindy! Lindy!"

"What in the world is the boy shouting about, Griffon?!"

"He's hallucinating, sir. It'll take us only a few seconds to sedate him...hold on, sir."

Something pricked Heero's injured shoulder, and a cold hand was placed on his feverish forehead.

"There. He should be knocked out in about a few seconds, sir."

\_LINDY! LINDY! Oh, God, Lindy...\_

"Good. Very good, Lieutenant. Now...take me to the other one. I want to..."

The voice drifted away, but his mind struggled to stay conscious.

\_Lindy! Lindy, Lindy...\_

Heero stopped struggling.

\_Lindy...Lindy...\_

A thick, drugged fog surrounded him as he slipped away.

\_Lindy.....who was...Lindy again?\_

\_ No one,\_ a voice within him answered. \_No one...important...\_

### 3. Default Chapter Title

><br>

\_LINDY! LINDY! Oh, God, Lindy...\_

"Good. Very good, Lieutenant. Now...take me to the other one. I want to..."

The voice drifted away, but his mind struggled to stay

conscious.

\_Lindy! Lindy, Lindy...\_

Heero stopped struggling.

\_Lindy...Lindy...\_

A thick, drugged fog surrounded him as he slipped away.

\_Lindy.....who was...Lindy again?\_

\_ No one,\_ a voice within him answered. \_No one...important...\_

\*\*\*

Crow glanced out the window of the aircraft at the small landmarks below. They looked so tiny, so small, so insignificant.

"Why so gloomy, Crow?" Griffon asked from beside Crow.

"Nothing," Crow mumbled, and was a little surprised at Griffon's question. Why was he talking? And to \_Crow,\_ for that matter? He hated Crow, and Griffon didn't make any efforts to hide it.

"The new recruits should strengthen Sage, don't you think?" he went on.

Crow nodded slightly and turned away from his smirking face.

"They might not even need certain unnecessarities. Sage might decide to be rid of those not necessary."

What was he getting at? To get rid of Crow? Over Gyre's body, that was for certain.

Griffon gave out a low, ominous chuckle and shook his head. "Of course you wouldn't understand. You're just a child."

"Don't call me that." It was said under Crow's breath, deadly serious. The wheels of the craft scratched concrete as they made their landing, and Crow viewed the many lined troops waiting to be recognized.

Around fifty new recruits. For Sage, from an ally colony, the only ally colony that they had. To boost it's power, it's strength.

Crow left the craft meekly beside Griffon to greet the recruits.

\*\*\*

Lieutenant Griffon was annoyed. First, Gyres had let that misfit child to tag along on an important errand, and then what turned out worse was the recruits.

They looked nothing fit for Sage. They slouched and chattered with each other, not even recognizing Sage's arrival.

"\_Order!\_" Griffon yelled. The chattering stopped, yet some still talked.

He gritted his teeth, walked over to the closest one, and brought the back of his hand across the boy's cheek.

\_SLAP!\_

Movement stopped, and all eyes focused on Griffon.

"Line \_up!\_"

A rush of movement, and they gathered up into a sloppy line.

\_Pathetic bunch,\_ Griffon thought. \_But we're sure to make them soldiers in no time.\_

"You are all here because of your colony's wish to grant the world and outer space a united freedom," Griffon began. He looked around at the recruits. They all looked...so young and inexperienced. He shook his head in disapproval.

"Sage was the right choice, ladies and gentlemen. I'm glad you chose the right way."

A sudden ripple of movement caught his eye.

A certain boy, wearing a formal outfit yet with the shirt being much too big for him, seemed to stand out from the rest.

Griffon walked over to him, glanced briefly at the dark blue eyes and shortly cropped light brown hair.

"What's your name, soldier?" Griffon ordered more than asked.

The soldier saluted, clicked his heels together, and stared straight ahead, avoiding Griffon's eyes.

"Sir, Rellen Darcraft, \_sir!\_"

The boy had an oddly higher pitched voice than the rest, but it was typical for a boy that age. He looked around Crow's age, so young.

Immediately, Griffon was intrigued by every movement he made. He cleared his throat, saluted back, and turned to the rest of the recruits.

"Board the craft," he commanded, but then turned back to the boy. "All but you, Darcraft. I want you to ride with me."

Something glittered in the boy's eyes; was it fear? This was the first time in all of Griffon's life that he was oddly...\_attracted...to a boy. He had to admit, though, this certain boy was rather...pretty.

\*\*\*



Relena's heart thrummed loudly in her ears as she boarded the private aircraft.

\_You mustn't be scared,\_ she commanded of herself. \_You mustn't, you mustn't...for Heero. Because I know wherever this aircraft is headed, Heero lies in wait for me...\_

It was Trowa who had cut her hair, Trowa who had snuck her onto the base unnoticed. Relena didn't know if she had made it here from pure luck or skilled training.

But now...was the lieutenant on to her little game? Did he suspect she was a girl? Did he recognize her, Relena Peacecraft? Or was he fooled?

A child that looked about the same age as her glanced over. Relena nodded recognition. But the child just...

Stared. Unblinkingly. As though the child could see into Relena's heart, her very soul, her immediate \_being...\_

\_Those eyes,\_ Relena thought, heart contracting. \_Those eyes that never seemed to blink...captivating. Such a light shade of gray to almost seem silver...\_

The child turned away and then suddenly, the child spoke.

"You know we'll all die," were the words whispered.

You know we'll all die.

\*\*\*

Trowa and Quatre both heard the communicator ring, but Quatre was the first to answer it.

"Relena?" Quatre asked, worry spiking his nerves. "Is that you?"

"Hello, Quatre," her barely audible frightened voice rang, sprinkled with static. "I'm at the base...connection seems bad...but I just wanted to tell you...safe...looking for Heero, trying to...about Sage..."

"Relena, are you sure this was a good idea?" Quatre asked, his forehead scrunching worriedly.

"Absolutely...Sage has...new recruits...collecting firepower...must leave--"

Then the connection broke.

"Relena!" he shot into the communicator. A hand gripped Quatre's shoulder tightly. Trowa. Quatre turned away, shaking her head. "We shouldn't have let her go...not by herself!"

"Relena can handle it," Trowa said, trying to comfort his friend.

Quatre was silent, deep in thought for a moment. Then he shrugged

Trowa's hand off violently, which shocked him into silence.

"Relena can handle it, I know!" he raged. "She can handle this mission, she can destroy the suits...but can she \_survive\_?" He shook his head. "That's a question you can't answer, Trowa. Maybe this was a mistake."

\*\*\*

Duo shook his head in dismay. Those boys shouldn't have let Relena go off as a spy, it wasn't bound to work. She would either end up getting killed, or end up killing them all.

"Not my problem," Duo muttered under his breath. The streets were empty, the rain battered lightly on his cap. The street lamps made fiery glows on the wet ground as he passed each one.

A figure lay ahead of him. It walked with a sort of grace, a cat's grace.

Trowa.

"Well, if it isn't Mr. Queen Killer," Duo muttered unhappily under his breath.

"Who says I'm a Queen Killer?" Trowa asked, not seeming a bit nonplussed.

"You will be," Duo snapped.

"Duo, I don't understand why you're so sore."

"Sore? I'm not sore. Sore isn't the word for it. But I think irritated would suffice."

Trowa shook his head and turned to the opposite direction.

He was nearing the woods where he had left Deathscythe Hell. The fearsome Gundam still looked a bit threatening even shut down.

Duo shook his own head. If they were going to let someone save Heero, why couldn't they have picked him?

\_Wrong choice, boys,\_ Duo thought grudgingly as he reached the spot where Deathscythe lay.

A strange ring filled the area, but Duo just shrugged it off. Probably a broken pipe or something. He continued to remove the camouflage net on Deathscythe.

Then, WHAM! Deathscythe shuddered violently.

"What the \_hell?!\_" Duo said, but he could no longer hear himself. Had he gone deaf or something?

The ground in front of him exploded! Pieces of rocks and clumps of grass were thrown into the air, and Duo fell back, dazed and hurt.

"Dammit!" Duo uttered unheard words. He scrambled up, higher and

higher into a tree. His first reaction, to see who the enemy was.

He saw a couple walking down the wet street. Couldn't they see?  
Didn't they hear?

Sudden movement. His enemy! Duo jumped down from the tree and ran to Deathscythe Hell, activating it.

\_You're my enemy!\_ Duo screamed in his head.

A flash of orange. Orange? A Gundam stood before him. Heavyarms.  
Trowa aimed his gun barrels at Deathscythe Hell.

\_What the hell?! Why is he attacking me!?!\_

Trowa flickered onto his left screen. He began to say something, but was unheard. Why couldn't Duo hear anything?

Duo shrugged into the screen, gave Trowa a bewildered look. Then Duo gritted his teeth. How could the guy pretend he didn't attack?

\_Fine,\_ Duo thought. \_He wants a fight, I'll give him a fight.\_

Duo grabbed his scythe, flipped a switch and the blade fired out, gleaming a glaring green.

He jumped, lunged for Trowa, the scythe high above his head! Heavyarms' right hand lashed out, the blade snapped out, and he thrust upwards. Duo blocked with his scythe, counter-attacked, but Trowa brought his left arm up and held it in position.

\_Hell,\_ Duo cursed.

Deathscythe jerked back slightly with each hit of each bullet that tore at him, but went back in again for the battle.

In the Gundam Heavyarms, Trowa Barton shot a barrage of bullets headed straight for Deathscythe Hell. He had no idea why Duo was fool enough to fight him, but Trowa had been threatened, and his main reaction was to stand his ground.

It seemed empty, the battle. So unsatisfying, so incomplete without the common battle noises...without the sound of his firing bullets or the \_twang\_ of Duo's scythe.

Trowa knew Duo had been angry about sending Relena on the mission, but not angry enough to actually \_attack\_ him.

Heavyarms quivered. Trowa struggled, his side aching, the arm that held the gun barrels straining.

He turned to a screen and said, "Duo, stop this or I'm going to have to destroy you."

But Duo's anger couldn't explain why he couldn't hear anything. Duo must have read his lips, because Trowa read his right back.

"Over my dead body!"

\_That's the point,\_ Trowa thought, but didn't say it.

The people. Couldn't they see them? Couldn't they hear them? Weren't they supposed to be screaming for mercy now? Unless...

\_The holograms.\_

Something glittered, took shape to his right screen. A Gundam, black as night, appeared out of thin air like some ghastly apparition.

\_Fools,\_ Trowa thought he heard in his mind.

\_You are fools.\_

\*\*\*

Crow watched as the two Gundams battled. They each thought it had been the other that had fired the shots at each of them.

They were fools.

Crow swung Echo around, aimed the beam cannon at the one with the scythe and prepared to throw the light saber at the one with the bullets.

Suddenly, a pain. In Crow's chest. Crow tremored, grunted, and stooped over for a moment. A low, dull ache. What was happening? Was it Crow's heart that was trembling so incredibly?

Crow's head shook, trying to get back to work, and the child prepared to destroy.

#### 4. Default Chapter Title

><br>

Crow watched as the two Gundams battled. They each thought it had been the other that had fired the shots at each of them.

They were fools.

Crow swung Echo around, aimed the beam cannon at the one with the scythe and prepared to throw the light saber at the one with the bullets.

Suddenly, a pain. In Crow's chest. Crow tremored, grunted, and stooped over for a moment. A low, dull ache. What was happening? Was it Crow's heart that was trembling so incredibly?

Crow's head shook, trying to get back to work, and the child prepared to destroy.

\*\*\*

Colonel Richard Gyres bowed his head to His Excellency.

"I understand, Your Greatness," Gyres replied. "Crow \_is\_ very young,

but I believe that the child can go farther. Yes, I shall test her on the Envisioned and Controlled Holocaust Order. May she fail it, a lower model shall be bestowed to her."

Gyres thought he could see admiration in Shriu Anork's eyes. He saluted and left the room.

\*\*\*

Relena was nervous as she was led to her quarters by the lieutenant. Three other soldiers were stationed there with her, and she felt nervous around them, too.

Maybe it was the gender factor.

"Darcraft," the unimaginably ominous lieutenant Griffon barked. He faced her, placed his hand to his forehead in salute, but kept it there. "These are your quarters. I want you to meet me in the Observation Area in the west wing at nineteen-hundred o'clock. In the meantime, feel free to wander around and get used to your surroundings."

He didn't tell her roommates they could do the same.

Relena saluted, the most jerky, masculine salute she compose, and as he was leaving, his arm brushed past her.

Had that been an accident? Relena wasn't sure she wanted to know.

Her roommates dropped down onto their beds after having had stood at attention, and they glared curiously at her.

"Why do you get special privileges?" one asked.

\_Yes,\_ Relena wanted to know. \_Why do I? Have they found out who I am at such an early stage?\_

"I'm not sure," Relena admitted, and without another word, she left in a hurry.

\_My gateway to Heero. I can roam as I please, and--\_

She almost crashed into someone coming out of a side door.

"Soldier," a strict voice commanded.

The voice rang with authority, and Relena automatically clicked her heels, stood at attention, and saluted.

"Sir, yes sir."

The man had jet black hair and beady black eyes, and just about towered over Relena. By his medals and badges, she guessed he was the colonel.

"What are you doing out of your room?"

He meant business.

"Lieutenant Griffon, sir," Relena answered, looking straight ahead. "He gave me permission to get used to the surroundings, \_sir.\_"

"Griffon, eh?" The colonel crossed his arms. "Wonder why he did that? Well, if he gave you grace to, then I guess it's alright. But make it quick."

"\_Yes sir!\_"

He turned and walked away.

Relena breathed a sigh of relief. She leaned against the door he had left and put her hand to her chest. Her heart was beating rapidly. She shook her head in disbelief to how close that had almost been.

The door behind her was cold. Relena turned to look at it.

**\*\*REHABILITATION WARD\*\***, it read in big, bold letters.

\_Heero. Are you in there?\_

She looked left, then right, and turned the knob.

There was a low ring of machines inside. To her right were machines she couldn't even identify. To her left were doctor's instruments, sharp and threatening.

Just in front of her was a hospital bed. And on it...

"Heero!" Relena said in a hushed whisper. She clicked the door noiselessly closed behind her and ran into the room to his side. His face had cuts, but they didn't look too deep, and they had bandaged his head. Blood leaked through poisonously. The rest of him, neck down, was covered with a white sheet.

But there was definitely life in his cheeks. Barely, but enough.

She grabbed at her communicator.

"Trowa. Heero has been confirmed. Do you hear me?" she said into it while pressing the button.

"Yes...connection isn't...a picnic...Quatre here, Trowa hasn't...back for a while...alright, Relena?"

"Yes," she answered. She looked over at Heero. "If you're going to save Heero, he's on the east wing of the Sage base, in the rehabilitation ward. Come and get us quick, Quatre. I..." \_I'm afraid.\_

"Over and out."

Relena put the communicator away and out of site.

"Heero," she said again, carefully placing her face above his to see if he could wake.

His eyelids fluttered, and a slight sound from the back of his throat was heard. His eyes slowly opened, not all the way, but enough for her to see beautiful Prussian blue, but they looked vacant.

He focused on her with great difficulty, and Relena guessed they had sedated him in some way.

"Piece of...Sage shit," he muttered unclearly under his breath. He shut his eyes for a brief moment, but opened them again, seeming a bit puzzled.

"Heero," Relena said for the third time. She agonizingly brushed a stray lock of hair out of his eyes. To touch him, oh, to touch him. She hadn't touched him in a long, long while that it made her ache to touch him again. she cupped his scratched cheek with her hand.

"Re...lena...?" he managed to breath out. But his eyes drooped, his lashes fluttered, and they closed.

"I'm getting you out of here, Heero," Relena promised, and she glanced at the digital clock on the wall. It read 6:56. "But not right now. My cover would blow."

Relena turned to go, then her heart stopped her. She turned back to him, hesitated, then tucked that stubborn lock of hair back into place again.

Bending down, she touched her lips briefly with his, and they moved slightly under her touch.

I love you, Heero, her heart whispered.

\*\*\*

Gyres smiled as the child boarded Echo.

They would run a series of tests on her to see if she was capable of braving outer space on her own, to pay a little visit to the L4 cluster. Yet they were going to make it a little different this time.

Echo was placed in an enclosed yet rather large space, larger than their mobile hangars, and Crow would have some Mobile Doll company in there with the kid.

Her test: not to let a single Doll touch her.

"Are you sure she's capable, sir?" Griffon asked.

Gyres was getting a little annoyed with Griffon. "Why do you always doubt the child's abilities, Griffon? Is it not enough that she delivered to us four of the five Gundam Pilots?"

"There is still one left, may I remind you, sir," Griffon said, looking straight ahead as Echo automated.

The door opened. Griffon and Gyres both turned around to see Rellen Darcraft enter the room.

\*\*\*

Relena entered the room with poise, but her insides were shaking. She saluted, and Griffon saluted right back, something glittering in his eyes.

Gyres looked annoyed.

"Why is he here, Griffon?" he asked, tapping his foot. "Having training soldiers running around is not at all good."

"Sir. Forgive me, sir, Colonel Gyres," Griffon said, swallowing. Relena liked how he quaked around Gyres. But that must've meant he was bad news. "I just thought you'd like to have a trainee view how well you've trained one of your students."

Griffon's attraction had only increased, and that irritated him. The boy's eyes were a wonder to him.

Gyres seemed to like Griffon's excuse, and he straightened.

"Watch, and watch well, soldier."

"Yes sir." Relena saluted.

The five Mobile Dolls were activated. The Gundam flew up, jets roaring, and from safely behind the glass, Relena watched the Gundam weaving its art.

A cannon was fired! The Gundam was up in the air, dodged, and flew through two Mobile Dolls. They followed her, traced her, but all the Gundam had to do was aim and fire its beam cannon. It destroyed both with one hit.

The ground quivered. Relena held a hand to the wall to steady herself.

"Are you sure this was such a good idea, sir?" Griffon asked. "What if Crow--"

"Don't talk when you aren't spoken to, Lieutenant," Gyres raged, clearly angry. He turned back to the glass and watched as Crow made her moves.

Breeeeemmm!

Another Mobile Doll down, and not a scratch on Crow. Relena was beginning to wonder who this pilot was.

A twist left, an angled, impossible ninety degree turn, and Breeeeemmm! Another Doll down for the count.

A shot was fired at Crow, and it almost hit the Gundam. Swerve left, swerve right, turn on a dime. The Doll flew, next to the window.

Crow aimed, fired! Breeeeemmm!

"Sir!" Griffon shouted, but too late. The room shook, shuddered,



seemed to welcome the blow.

Relena was caught off guard, and she fell into Gyres. They both slipped, fell, and \_WHAM!\_ Slammed onto the floor. Relena was facing down, and Gyres was right beneath her. His eyes flashed, and she knew her secret had been found out.

"Colonel Gyres, are you alright?!" Griffon helped him up, the trembling ceased.

Gyres dusted himself off, slapped Griffon's helping hand away from him. He glared hatefully at Relena.

"So," Gyres said, his voice laced with venom. "You're a \_woman\_, aren't you."

Not a question. Not from Colonel Richard Gyres. A stated fact.

"\_A woman?!\_" Griffon was mortified. He had thought she was a mere, delicate, attractive boy!

"It seems we have been deceived, Griffon," Gyres said in a calmly deadly voice. "I ought to get you courtmarshalled for letting this \_girl\_ come in here."

Silence from Griffon. Then, "What will you do with him...er, \_her\_, \_sir?"

"His Excellency will want to hear about this."

Relena Peacecraft's world went still.

\*\*\*

They entered a small room. Right in front of them was another door, made of steel. Gyres opened that one for her and pushed her roughly inside. It was very dark.

Relena wasn't surprised to find out it smelled like death and decay.

"What do you keep in here," Relena asked softly. "Dead rats?"

"Silence," Gyres said. In the very little light, his eyes glowed, became almost translucent. An insane gleam leaped within them.

Relena's blood ran cold.

"Your Excellency," Gyres said. "I have a prisoner

There was a small spotlight that focused on a point in the middle of the room. In the center was a chair, and a figure sat in that chair.

Relena took a small step forward, and her breath caught in her mouth. Her heart battered loudly in her ears, and she started to pant with an emotion...not fear, and not amazement, but some feeling in between both...

The man sitting in the chair was wearing a general's outfit. He had dark brown hair and if he stood, he would probably be very tall. There was just one problem.

The man in the chair was completely dead.

It looked to Relena like he had been dead for years. Cobwebs had gathered onto him, his flesh was rotting and decayed, his eye sockets were gaping holes.

Bile rose again in Relena's throat...when she had first seen Heero hurt in his Gundam, and when she had that thought about a corpse pulling her into its grave...the corpse looked exactly like Shriu Anork looked now. Had she predicted this would happen?

A sword was stabbed into his--its--mid-section.

"Your orders, your Supreme," Gyres went on as though he didn't notice Relena's disgust.

Her stomach heaved, but she wouldn't throw up. She couldn't throw up, not here, not now! Relena closed up her throat, but the smell, that smell...

She covered her nose and mouth with her hand. Please, oh, please no...

"His Highness commands that you be executed," Gyres told her.

"What?" Relena asked behind her hand. What is the man saying? The body didn't say a thing, it's dead!

"You're to be exterminated," Gyres enunciated. His eyes focused on hers. "Wiped out. Killed."

Relena panted with disgust at the body. "You mean like him?" She thrust her chin forward at the monstrosity.

WHAM! A fist was pounded into the wall, and Gyres was on fire.

"You must not show DISRESPECT TO GENERAL ANORK! TO DO SO WOULD MEAN TORTURED DEATH!"

Gyres was breathing hard, but he transformed all of a sudden. That mad light was in his eyes again, and he started to laugh a low, sinister laugh.

"Khushrenada stabbed Anork with that deadly thing," he laughed, getting hysterical. "But he still lives! He breathes, he speaks to me! I listen to his orders, and with his ideas, his words, his mind, I can take over the universe! Ha ha haha ha ha!"

Relena took a step back and stared on in horror at the broken man.

"You're insane," she breathed.

His laughter died down, and he glanced over at her. Cleared his throat. "Yes. Well, maybe so. But I know I am \_right!\_ Ha ha ha!"

Relena just stared in shocked disbelief.

\*\*\*

Quatre jerked awake. He had fallen asleep straddling a chair while waiting for Trowa and Duo to return in the hangar, and something had woken him up.

Sandrock had been activated.

\_Outer space...space...\_

"What?" Quatre asked. He blinked, stared wonderingly at Sandrock...was that Sandrock that he had just heard?

\_Space...\_

Quatre shook his head to clear his thoughts. "I...I don't understand, are you trying to tell me something, Sandrock?"

\_Go to...space...outer space...\_

Quatre's heart rate slowed down, his mind sped up. "You want me to go to outer space."

\_Yes...you must...to outer...space...\_

"But Sandrock...why?"

Sandrock's eyes glowed, more glimmering, brighter, as though this message were the most important of all.

\_Your fate lies in wait for you there.\_

## 5. Default Chapter Title

\_Go to...space...outer space...\_

Quatre's heart rate slowed down, his mind sped up. "You want me to go to outer space."

\_Yes...you must...to outer...space...\_

"But Sandrock...why?"

Sandrock's eyes glowed, more glimmering, brighter, as though this message were the most important of all.

\_Your fate lies in wait for you there.\_

\*\*\*

Crow had passed the test.

Crow should have been happy, should have been glad, but somehow, for some reason, the child was not.

Since the child had passed the test, outer space was the next mission. Before the last Gundam Pilot was caught, Crow was going to outer space with a backup troop of Leos at command at arrival, and was going to take over each L4 colony.

One by one with the help of the holograms and the invisibility cloak that shielded off radar.

The stars glimmered all around the Echo, making it seem to Crow as though the child were surrounded. It sent a shiver down Crow's spine.

"Space. It's so big."

The L4 colony cluster was just ahead. The invisibility cloak was activated after Echo had left Earth's atmosphere.

But in the corner of Crow's eye, something incredible appeared.

A Gundam. Gundam zero-four.

Crow smiled, satisfied. They weren't supposed to target this Gundam just yet, but certain arrangements could be made. The sound barrier wasn't needed.

In space, no one could hear you.

"You're mine," Crow whispered.

\*\*\*

Quatre was in outer space. The L4 cluster was just ahead, but he wasn't sure if he was supposed to head there or not.

"What now, Sandrock?" he asked.

No answer from the Gundam. Had he just imagined it? Had he just imagined that Sandrock had talked to him back at the base?

"Sandrock," Quatre said, feeling frustrated. "What was it you were trying to tell me?"

BAMM! Quatre's head rocked back, he instantly grabbed at his controls.

\_That.\_

"I see." Quatre swung around, spotted nothing but stars. "But what is it?!" He felt watched. Felt targeted, felt exposed. "Who in the world is it?"

BAMM! Quatre flew back. His Gundam flew back. He powered the jet engine, and the Gundam stopped where it was. He gripped tightly at his blades.

\_Where are you?\_ he thought angrily in his mind.

His blades eagerly waited for him to slice through metal. But none could be seen.

Then, suddenly, BAM! Utter pain shocked through Quatre's head.

"Arrrrgghhh!" he cried. Where was the enemy?! Wy couldn't he see anything anywhere?!

\_Mere Gundam, dare to show himself to me?\_ Quatre's head pounded, yet that voice. He could hear it inside his head. \_I don't think so.\_

\_Stop! Why are you doing this?\_ he screamed in his head. There was silence. He didn't really expect an answer.

But an answer came.

\_How...how do you speak to me?\_

Quatre's eyes grew large with shock. They were having a conversation within their minds! This was insane! Impossible! Unheard of! Unspeakable!

\_Answer me!\_

BAM! BA-BAM! Quatre rocked, his world reeled, but he turned to where the blast had hit him. In one fluid motion, he sent his right blade flying, headed for the direction of the blast.

It was an agonizing two seconds. Then, suddenly, the blade hit something! But...nothing. And yet, something had stopped it.

The very place in front of Quatre flickered once, twice, then flickered again. Blackness showed three times, then, flickered one last time and stayed black, blocking out all of the stars in the shape of a Gundam.

The blade was dug deep into the Gundam's right shoulder.

"A Gundam," Quatre breathed, pain stabbing at his side.

\*\*\*

Crow shuddered from within. Crow had been beaten, had been hit, and Crow's grip on the controls tightened. Her shock was what hit. Crow had been able to hear his voice inside the very mind. And that had shocked the child Pilot.

Imperfection! The child had been tainted by this Pilot, wounded, and for the first time, experienced Gundam pain.

It was a terrible pain that not only caused Crow physical pain, but mental as well, knowing that Echo was hurt.

\_You must give up,\_ Crow thought silently in strain. \_You must now raise your hands in surrender. Do not allow him to further hurt Echo.\_

And then the door in front of her opened, and Crow stepped out into outer space with the space suit on.

\*\*\*

The Pilot of the Gundam had opened the door and stepped out. The Pilot pushed off from the door and floated towards Quatre in the slow that space provided, and didn't stop until he or she reached Sandrock's head and grabbed for the spikes.

Quatre turned his screen to the Pilot, and he got an excellent view of the Pilot's face. The Pilot was silhouetted against the moon, making an iridescent shine against the visor.

The Pilot was a **\*\*girl\*\***. And was the most enchanting creature he had ever seen.

**\*\*Her\*\*** mid-neck length brown hair was the softest he had ever seen, so soft you craved to touch it, and **\*\*her\*\*** eyes...**\*\*her\*\*** \_eyes.\_ They were such a bewitching gray that it made them seem mystically silver.

Quatre stopped. But was she beautiful? One couldn't tell. At first she'd seem to be, but then at a second glance she would seem so totally scarred that it made it seem impossible for her to be.

Not physical scars. Scars of the soul.

\_I am defeated,\_ that voice rang again inside his head. \_You have won.\_

Quatre refused to answer. He was afraid of it, the communication between them, and to avoid that, he simply didn't speak to her at all.

A great sorrow filled Quatre as he stared at her, so great he started to tremble.

Suddenly, the Pilot grabbed at her chest and doubled over. She seemed to be in pain.

\_Stop it! This pain racks my body limb from limb!\_

Then, she stopped moving and started to float off.

"I'm not going to let you get off that easily," Quatre said, and he grasped her gently with Sandrock's hand.

\*\*\*

\_Her world consisted of nothing but rock. Jagged, sharp, lethal rocks that jutted out from the ground.\_

\_ Is this what had become of her? Is this where hell was? Where was the fire? The whips? The dogs that ate at her skin?\_

\_ A girl just ahead. Dressed in pink. The girl had light brown hair and amazing green eyes. She turned on her heel and ran away from Crow.\_

\_ "Lindy!" Crow cried, giving in chase. But her legs weren't moving as fast as she wanted, it was as though she were trying to move through glue.\_

\_ "Lindy, come back!" came her pleading cries. Crow stumbled, fell, and got right back up again onto her feet. "Lindy...oh, Lindy, please!"\_

\_ Crow started to cry. Lindy was running away from her again, just like before...\_

\_ "Lindy, come back!" Crow fell to her knees, gripped her head in her hands tightly. "Lindy!" she sobbed uncontrollably. "Lindy, Lindy! Come back!! PLEASE!"\_

\_ Nothing answered her but a little girl's terrified scream.\_

Crow gasped, jerked awake, sat up in bed and shuddered. Her body felt cold, and she grabbed the blankets and held them to her closely.

"You're awake."

Crow looked up and stared right up at a gun's barrel.

"A gun," she said. "How brutal."

"Brutal?" the boy asked incredulously. "\_Brutal?\_ The only thing brutal is attacking me with an invisible Gundam. Where's your honor? Your respect? You don't shoot someone when their back is turned. Or \_do\_ you?"

"Don't be absurd."

Crow lashed out, grabbed the gun from his hand, and turned the barrel to him. She smiled slightly, the corner of her lips drifting upwards, and she said, "Goodbye, Gundam Pilot."

She pointed it to his head and pulled the trigger.

\_Click.\_

Her smile vanished and she stared down at the gun. Pulled the trigger on him twice more.

\_Click. Click.\_

"It's not loaded," she grumbled. It fell to the floor with a soft thud.

"Tell me where the others are," he commanded. "I know their disappearance has something to do with you."

"You seem young to be a Pilot," she said. \_And too innocent and attractive.\_

"So do you." He bowed, looked totally solemn. "My name is Quatre Rebarba Winner."

"Crow." She looked at him oddly, then around the room. This certainly

wasn't a prisoner's quarters. The walls were furnished with rugs, and the carpeting looked soft and clean enough to sleep on. Though the windows were barred, and Crow had no doubt in her mind that the doors locked.

But it was huge.

"Is this your house?" she asked.

"Would you like something to eat?" he asked, not answering her question.

"Something...to eat? What is this, the Four Seasons Hotel? I'm your prisoner. You're supposed to keep me in a filthy, dirty dungeon, and treat me like crap. Why aren't you treating me like shit?"

Quatre raised an eyebrow. "You want me to treat you like that?"

"If you hadn't had shown up in outer space, I wouldn't have attacked you."

"Well if you hadn't had attacked me, you wouldn't be here."

Crow's ire spiked, and she said, "Well if you had just kept your rich little ass at home, you wouldn't have to waste breakfast on me!"

"If you hadn't..." Quatre stopped, shook his head. He couldn't believe he was actually bickering with someone.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I have to leave. I'll have breakfast sent up to you."

"Quatre," she called him back, feeling his name on her lips and enjoying it. She hesitated, and then, "My real name is Mireka."

He frowned. "Mireka?"

"It means `wings.'"

\*\*\*

Relena Peacecraft shivered in the room they had placed her in. It was an office of some sort, with a desk up in the front and bookshelves lining the walls to her sides.

Was Heero alright? Had he gained consciousness yet? Relena was nearly sick with worry. Why wasn't Quatre here yet?

\*\*\*

Heero Yuy's eyes opened. For once, since he had been in here, he wasn't in a drugged cloud.

He tried to get up, but he found he was in steel restraints that bound his wrists and ankles to the table.

Relena...had she come by? Dressed as a boy, with a crew cut. The thought almost made him want to laugh, but he distinctly remembered



touching his own lips with hers.

\_Relena,\_ he thought. \_It was stupid of you to come and get me. But take care.\_

\*\*\*

Chang Wufei strained against the restraints. He wasn't bleeding anymore, but his thoughts were.

It wasn't just a coincidence that he had seen a crow right before the black Gundam showed up. Had the crow been warning him about his fate? Had the Gundam captured any of the others?

His mind pleaded to know.

\*\*\*

Trowa Barton stared up, unmoving, at the ceiling of the blindingly white room. They had him in restraints he couldn't break.

\_Maybe this was a mistake...\_Quatre's words echoed in his head. \_A mistake.\_

Maybe it was. But Trowa also knew that he wasn't wrong about Relena. Relena could make it through this, she had the strength and the courage to survive.

\_My hopes are with you,\_ he cried silently out to her.

\*\*\*

Duo Maxwell kept trying to squeeze loose of his restraints.

"Aw, man, don't they ever wonder about the prisoner's comfort?" Duo asked aloud to himself, giving up and flopping back down onto the table.

Why had he automatically assumed Trowa had attacked him? If he hadn't had been so dumb, he wouldn't be in this situation right now.

"I am \_so\_ not hip at the moment," Duo muttered under his breath.

\*\*\*

Quatre looked up at his Gundam.

\_I have to get Relena and the others,\_ he thought to himself. \_But Rasheed says I won't be able to pilot Sandrock for another three days because of the damages...\_

He clenched his fist to his chest in frustration.

"Why must it always be this way?" he asked himself softly.

\_I'm coming, friends. Please wait just a while longer.\_

><br>

Quatre looked up at his Gundam.

\_I have to get Relena and the others,\_ he thought to himself. \_But Rasheed says I won't be able to pilot Sandrock for another three days because of the damages...\_

He clenched his fist to his chest in frustration.

"Why must it always be this way?" he asked himself softly.

\_I'm coming, friends. Please wait just a while longer.\_

\*\*\*

Relena's eye caught onto the matches in the drawer.

\_This place will burn,\_ she vowed silently. Then she shook her head. \_No, I mustn't. Heero is still weak, and I haven't found out where the others are yet, and...\_

She fell to her knees and placed a hand to her forehead. What had she been thinking? Risking Heero's life like that, even when hers was still on the line.

Then, she shook her head.

And grabbed the matches.

\*\*\*

Quatre knocked on the door.

"Come in," came from inside. "It's not like I can even open the freaking door."

Quatre entered, paused. She was sitting on the bed, doing nothing. Just...nothing. Her hands behind her head, and she smiled innocently.

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"I wanted to talk to you."

Quatre closed the door behind him, pulled up a chair, and sat down, trying to organize his thoughts. This girl, this girl that he met just days ago and never seemed to leave his mind, this girl...

"I came to ask," he said, clearing his throat.

Her eyes narrowed, and she said, "Ask what?"

Quatre shrugged. He couldn't understand. He couldn't see why a girl that has so much talent, so much value, could get caught up with Sage. How she could truly be bad inside.

He couldn't see that, knowing her for the past few days.

"How you got involved with such corruption," he explained with compassion. "How you could hurt people, take over people as though they were...cows. How you could...be such a large part of this."

He had expected Crow to laugh it off. But then, something showed in her eyes. Regret. Was that it? Or was it anger?

"It's all I've been taught," she said softly, turning away from him. "All I'll I've ever...known."

"It's not the only way," he pressed, frustrated. Such an enchanting creature couldn't dare hope for a future if this was the path she chose. "Don't you want to get married, to live in a house with a garden, don't you want that? To watch your children grow and have nothing to worry about but..."

He paused, shook his head. It was hopeless. It was the path she had chosen long ago, and he could do nothing to change that. Why had he even come to talk to her?

"Oh, Quatre..." she said. She got up, walked over to him. He stood, looking down into her eyes, such a gray abyss...

"Crow," he murmured.

She shook her head, trying to dismiss the thought, but looked back up at him. He cared for her so much.

"Please," she whispered. "Don't call me that."

\_Why?\_ she thought angrily. \_Why does he have to go and do that? Why must he...care so much about everything?\_

Quatre's hand came up, was about to tuck a lock of her hair behind her ear, but she held his wrist and kept his hand from touching her.

\_This feeling scares me,\_ she thought. \_And I'm escaping as soon as I can. Away from this, away from Quatre, away from his kindness and caring...away from this feeling that tightens my heart so.\_

"Please leave," she said with difficulty.

His eyes shone with sadness as he turned and locked the door behind him.

\*\*\*

Relena coughed. The office curtains were angry with fire, and she turned to run.

But the flame followed her. It caught quickly onto the bookcases, then caught onto the door.

She coughed again, covered her mouth. Sweat blinded her as she searched for a way to escape. The door. The only means for escaping were through the door. Unless she hurled herself from the five story building, which, in her mind, was an absolute unlikelihood.

Heero and the others...

Her leg lashed out and connected with the door, and the door shook. But didn't budge.

"Come on," Relena begged. She kicked it again, and this time, she heard wood splintering.

\_It's just you and me, door,\_ she thought in her head.

\_WHAM! WHAM! WHA-CR-CRACKK!\_ Relena fell through, smelling her clothes burning, and she patted herself off to get rid of the stray flames.

The sirens started suddenly. She looked up, then ran to where she knew the Rehab ward was.

"Heero!" She slammed her fists into the door. "Heero, come on!"

\*\*\*

Heero Yuy screamed as the sound of metal breaking hit his ears. His right hand was immobile, screaming, yalling, aching, shooting with pain.

He grabbed the keys on the doctor's table with a limp hand and painfully unlocked his left wrist and ankles.

Suddenly, an alarm broke the silence of his room. Then, banging on the door.

"Heero! Heero, come on!"

"Relena," he whispered. He held his right wrist to him as he opened the door. She fell through, and he caught her wrist.

"Heero!" She paused, looked down at his hand. "You really \_are\_ super-human."

"Relena, it was stupid of you to come here," he said angrily as he led her out. People streamed through the hallways, and a fire was blazing after them.

"Hose! Hose! Get me a hose! I need \_water,\_ dammit!"

Relena saw Colonel Gyres scurry past everybody else. The fire was rapidly increasing its growth.

"Come on," Heero said, leading her into an abandoned hallway. "I know where the others are."

Relena coughed, sputtered in the smoke as they ran. "Heero! If you attack the Observation Room first, they'll be caught off guard! Next you attack the hangar!"

"How do you know all of this?"

"No time to explain, where are the others?!"

"I only know that Duo is down here."

Heero saw an officer running towards the others. He twirled, kicked him in the head, and he fell. Heero grabbed the guy's gun with his left hand.

\_Fwwoosshh!\_ The fire's angry call threatened them. They had to move faster.

Heero found a door and slammed into it. It burst open, and inside lay duo Maxwell, restrained.

"Heero! Hey!" Duo siled suinnily. "I knew you'd come, even though you were pretty mashed up back there. He glanced at Relena. "And has our spy down her work?"

"Spy? You sent her on as a \_spy?!\_"

Relena, not listening to them both, had unlocked Duo.

People screamed, people ran, people screamed some more. It was total chaos. You would have thought that at a military base they would do this calm an orderly.

"Where's the fire?" Duo asked, and then suddenly, \_Bree-bamm!\_ The ceiling was starting to cave in. Fire snaked through and Relena grabbed Duo to get him out of the way.

\_CRASH!\_

"That answers my question," Duo said shakily.

"Duo," Heero barked. "You are in charge of getting the others. I'm going to get Relena out of the way."

"She's in the way? I thought for a minute there that she saved my life."

"Just \_go!\_"

Heero stuffed his gun into his pants, grabbed Relena's arm yet again and charged out the door, headed for the hangar.

\*\*\*

Sandrock powered up. He had been finished early than expected.

"Are you ready, Sandrock?" Quatre asked softly.

"Quatre! Quatre!"

Quatre's head flew down. He saw Mireka running towards his Gundam, with Rasheed chasing after her.

"I'm sorry, Master Quatre, she just slinked right past me," Rasheed explained, panting. Mireka, however, wasn't at all tired. She leaned against the railing and looked up at him on his Gundam.

"Quatre, don't leave," she ordered. "You don't know what Gyres is

capable of, or Griffon! They'll kill you without a moment's thought."

"I have to go and see if my friends are alright," he explained.

"Then let me go with you."

"That is absolutely out of the question, Crow!"

"\_Mireka!\_ My name is \_Mireka!\_" Her eyes shone with anger and grief and regret, all at once. They dropped to the floor.

Quatre shook his head. "I just can't risk it. I'm sorry, Mireka."

His Gundam moved, and then soon left.

\_You're so kind, Quatre,\_ she whispered in her heart. \_Too kind.\_

Rasheed went for her wrist.

"Please," she said, her eyes pleading. "Please let me go after him."

"For what?" Rasheed asked.

"I'll tell you."

And she did.

\*\*\*

Colonel Richard Gyres coughed. Sweat dribbled into his eyes, stinging and painful.

"Griffon!" he cried. "Griffon, where are you?!"

Griffon appeared at his side, looking as bad as he.

"Where the \_hell\_ is Crow? Weren't you monitoring her?"

"We lost her somewhere near the L4 cluster," Griffon coughed. A lie, but it worked. Griffon knew she had gotten captured, but he was glad. He hoped they killed her.

"Well, who \_started\_ this batstardly fire?!\_" Gyres wailed.

"The source seemed to be from the room where the prisoner was kept, sir."

"ARRGGGHHH! DAMN THAT DARCRAFT!"

"Sir, I suggest we leave!"

\_BA-B00000000000MMM!\_

Gyres was knocked off of his feet. "What the hell was that?!"

Griffon looked at the control panel and let out an anguished cry. "They've laid bombs in the Observation Room and the hangar, sir!"

"My creations!" Gyres screamed, rushing to his Mobile Dolls. "Find them \_all! And kill them all, do you hear!? KILL THEM ALL!!!\_"

\*\*\*

Sandrock landed amidst the mayhem.

"A fire!" Quatre called. "Who...? \_Relena.\_"

He saw two tiny specks on the ground fleeing from the building.

"Relena! Heero! Are you alright?" he asked.

"Attack the building!" Heero cried. "Trowa and the others may have missed a few invisible suits!"

"Attack the west wing!" Relena shouted. "The west wing!"

\_Maybe it wasn't a mistake, sending her off to spy,\_ he thought. \_If this works, then we'll defeat them. And it won't have been for nothing.\_

\*\*\*

Trowa Barton tried to get the files.

"Forget that, Trowa!" Duo yelled. "Come one! We're gonna burn!"

"I have to hack into the computer's main system," he explained. "It'll only take a minute, and if I'm successful, the invisibility formula will--"

"We don't got a minute!"

Duo grabbed Trowa and hauled him over to the door. "Forget the technology! Attacking people secretly wasn't my thing, anyway!"

Wufei grabbed a gun and headed for the door as well.

"I hear a bird's angry call," he whispered.

\*\*\*

Griffon saw the Gundam and growled under his breath.

"Filthy Gundam Pilot! How dare you attack our base?!"

The Gundam stopped suddenly, and a boy jumped down.

"What I'm doing is no worse than what you've done," he said defiantly. "I am only fixing the problem."

Griffon pulled a gun and aimed it at Quatre. "The only problems were you and your fellow Pilots," he growled.

Quatre started to back away.

And Griffon prepared to pull the trigger.

\_BLAM!\_

## 7. Default Chapter Title

><br>

Griffon saw the Gundam and growled under his breath.

"Filthy Gundam Pilot! How dare you attack our base?!"

The Gundam stopped suddenly, and a boy jumped down.

"What I'm doing is no worse than what you've done," he said defiantly. "I am only fixing the problem."

Griffon pulled a gun and aimed it at Quatre. "The only problems were you and your fellow Pilots," he growled.

Quatre started to back away.

And Griffon prepared to pull the trigger.

\_BLAM!\_

Quatre and Griffon stared at each other for three endless seconds as Quatre realized what he'd done.

Then Griffon fell. His gun clattered to the floor.

The roar of the fire filled the silence, and Quatre looked up.

Crow stood there, silhouetted against the fire, the fire's glow making her seem like the goddess of hell.

"Mireka," Quatre breathed.

"I couldn't let him shoot you," she whispered. "Besides. I hated his guts."

"Mireka...why?"

"Because, Quatre," she said. "Because I've grown to like you. And it would be a pity to see you perish."

"The real reason."

She looked surprised, then defeated. "That is the real reason. Other than one other fact."

Quatre sucked in a sharp breath. "And...that is?"



Mireka stepped forward, placed her hands around him and held the back of his head. "Because, my kind Quatre...I think I may be...."

She pulled him down slowly and cool lips touched his warm ones, the kiss meaning to be sweet and slow. But it grew into something else entirely. Rough, and stormy, just like the fire that was ablaze behind them.

His hands moved and slid to her back, pulling her in closer, savoring her, and her neck craned to try to match his kiss.

"Uh, hello?" Duo ran past, trying to catch their attention. "Destroy now, kiss later? The philosophy works, ya know."

Mireka parted away from Quatre, panting. "No time. Destroy the base. And please take care."

"Hey! That's the enemy!" Duo pulled a gun, but she kicked it out of his hand.

"Quatre," Duo whined. "Are you going traitor or something?"

"He's not the one going traitor," Mireka explained.

Quatre boarded Sandrock and gripped at his blades tightly.

\*\*\*

Trowa punched in the code, and the cells were opened. The prisoners from the villages rushed out, sweating and crying, though they seemed a lot calmer than Gyres' troops had been.

"We must hurry outside," Wufei said, looking around. He felt something. Something..."Hurry, for the dawn of the Crow is no longer."

"What is he mumbling about?" Duo asked as they raced out.

\*\*\*

Heero watched as the girl ran across the landing strip. He coughed, turned to Relena and said, "Relena, stay here. I have to finish something."

"Heero!" she protested, but he was off.

Heero grabbed the gun and swerved in front of her.

"Heero Yuy," she said. "So we meet again."

"I don't think we've been properly introduced," Heero said slowly, that death glare gleaming in his eyes again. "You whipping my butt and destroying ZERO does not make a good first impression."

"ZERO? Is that what you call your Gundam?"

He didn't answer, just cocked the gun.

Panic invaded her eyes, but the look of determination was stronger.

"If you shoot me, you'd be making a very large mistake."

"You're not in a position to tell me what my mistakes are."

Suddenly, the way the fire reflected off of her pulled at his mind.

Those eyes, that hair...that face. All of it seemed so strangely familiar to him...

"Please don't kill," she said. "Please stop."

Heero's left arm trembled as he held the gun. No, no, it couldn't be...

She looked faintly like Lindy.

Heero fell to his knees, bowed his head, and dropped the gun. "Lindy," he whispered.

Crow clutched her chest. "What are you...what did you say?"

A pain racked through her heart just at that moment. Why was she...feeling his pain? Why was she...experiencing it?

"Lindy," Heero mumbled. He couldn't kill Lindy, not again...

"Lindy," she said suddenly. "Lindy...did you say Lindy?"

A blast of anger flamed inside of Heero's chest, and the crackle of the fire burned with it. He looked up at her, hot and blazing. "You don't know her. You \_don't.\_"

"Lindy Meyers. Sweet, eight years old..."

"No, no, \_stop...\_" Heero started to shake his head. "No, \_stop lying!\_"

"She had light brown hair. And...and the most adorable, light brown eyes..."

The crackle of the fire met with Heero's anger, outraged and potent. His head shook from side to side, his eyes gleamed with such a ferocity that it spiked Mireka to the very bone.

"She was my sister." She was crying now, and revenge flickered in stone-cobble gray.

Grabbing the gun, Heero threw it at her in a rage. She caught it. "Kill me!" he screamed at her. "Kill me! Do it! Avenge Lindy's death!"

"I..." Mireka looked at the gun, then at Heero. \_I can't. It would be so much like Sage if I did that...and I don't want to be a part of them any longer.\_

A cold laugh rang from behind Mireka. She turned, saw Gyres with his arms folded across his chest.

"Good girl, my Crow," he crooned. He stared with hatred at Heero Yuy. "So. I didn't realize you were such a strong soldier, Heero Yuy. Giving up valiantly in the hands of my top soldier."

"Go call Griffon then," Crow suddenly said. "Because I am no longer your soldier."

Gyres' eyes narrowed. "Come now, Crow. Don't be daft. Shoot the man."

"I am no longer under your command, Colonel Gyres," she whispered.

Gyres, so like a father to her. Gyres, so understanding of her when Griffon underestimated her.

Her tear-stained face lifted to meet his, and Gyres put a hand on her shoulder. "Why are you doing this, Crow? You had always been so obedient. If you repent now, I won't be hard on you. Sage will--"

"Open your eyes. Sage is burning to the ground."

\_BLAM!\_

Gyres flew back, shocked, stunned at what she had done. He fell to one knee, then the other, blood trickling from a hole in his mid-section.

"Crow," he gasped, placing a hand in front of him so as not to topple over. "Crow...you...choose this...opposing side...over me?"

Tears blurred her eyes again, and she nodded silently.

"What would your...father...Shriu Anork...say, my darling?"

She pointed the gun to him once more, her hand wavering but her heart holding poise. "My father is dead."

\_BLAMBLAMBLAM!\_

And Richard Gyres fell.

\*\*\*

\_Boom! Ba-BOOM BOOM BOOOOOOMMMM!!\_

The west wing shuddered under Quatre's blades. If it didn't explode one more time...

\_BA-BLAAAAAAMMMMM!!!\_

Relena had been right. So it \_hadn't\_ been a mistake sending her...

Quatre walked away, watching from his screen as the rest of the base crumbled to the floor.

\_\*\*CREEEUUNNKKK-BABOOOOOMMMMM-BOOOOOOOM

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMM!!!\*\_

Sage was now dead.

"Rest in peace," Quatre whispered.

"Quatre!"

He looked down, saw a certain shade of brown.

"Mireka."

He hopped down from his Gundam as Mireka ran towards him. She had been crying. She stopped about five feet away from him, her fists clenched to her sides.

"Quatre, this feeling," she said, shaking her head. "I don't know..."

"Don't be scared of it," he said. "You're...not exactly alone."

Duo, Trowa, Wufei, Relena, and then, finally, Heero, all circled them.

"Hey," Duo muttered playfully. "How come Quatre gets a girlfriend and I don't?"

"So. Is this the end?" Trowa asked, looking back at the base. There was hardly anything left of the base but its foundation.

"It just may be," Relena said, smiling.

"I seem to have a brief memory of a soldier kissing me," Heero mused as he stared at her.

She blushed, smiled shyly. People wandered around Sandrock and the Pilots, dazed, but seeming to get the basic idea that they had been captured and that it was now over.

But Quatre and Mireka were left alone. The people around them had disappeared, and they were sucked into a world they didn't recognize.

She took a step towards him, and he to her, and he took her in his arms and stared down contently at her.

"What do you think?" she asked him. "Is it over? Is there a future for these people?"

"Hopefully," he said, smiling in his eyes, "there will be. And...as for us?"

"Is there really an \_us\_, Quatre?"

"If you want there to be. What does your future hold?"

She smiled a brilliant smile, pressed his forehead against hers affectionately, and said, "Oh, a number of things. Getting married, living in a house with a garden. Watching my children grow. And best of all..."

Quatre gazed tenderly into her eyes.

"And best of all...you."

\*\*\*

The crow sailed desolately, high in the sky. Suddenly, it dove, landed on the body, and stood there, on the body's mid-section, unmoving for a few seconds.

Then, it leaped into the air, off of Gyres' body, caught the drift, and let out one final, shrieking call.

"\_Caaaaaawwww!!\_"

End  
file.